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No. 65.

WE PRAY FOR YOU AT HOME.

BY REV. JOHN A. BROADUS, D. D., OF S. C.

When we meet for worship in the Church where you used to meet with us, sadly we miss you there, as we look at the place in which you loved to sit, and which for all these weary months has been vacant. Ah! many a manly form is wanting to our number, and many a deep, full tone to the harmony of the songs of praise we once delighted to sing together. But we who remain with all the tenderness of true affection, blended with the sacredness of solemn worship, pray then for you. And often, as the heart-felt petitions are uttered, tears are in every eye, and subdued sobs are heard here and there, while we pour forth our whole souls in supplication for our country and for you. When happy and hopeful, we feel encouraged to pray; when depressed and anxious, all the more are we inclined, yea compelled, to pray. Sometimes we remember, that even while we worship, with the Sabbath-day stillness all around, you may be in the terrible shock of batttle, amid all its wild commotion and its

dreadful danger. Stirred by such a thought, we do not fall down and tremble; but, thanking God anew that he permits us to pray, we lift our beseeching, agonizing cry to Him in your behalf.

When we gather our now broken circle for family prayer. Then all things remind us of the absent, and every heart in the little group, younger and older, bond and free, throbs when our petitions are for you. It is a topic of prayer that does not grow old, but, like the mercies of God, it is new every morning and fresh every evening. Recall the memories of that scene; remember us not as we were in days of prosperity, when the heart grew sluggish and the prayer was tame, but as in a season when some one was very ill, and we cried to God that he would not take the loved one away—and you may partly understand with what earnestness of soul we pray for you.

When alone with our beating hearts and our God, in secret devotion. Like the dew-drops that have gathered all night, and in the morning exhale, so the thoughts of affection and anxiety that have been gathering for hours about our hearts turn now to prayer, and mount up as incense before the Lord. And this is no general supplication, such as others may share in, but the yearning spirit pleads for one alone—for one whose dear image rises in a moment to view, whose voice, associated with the fondest recollections of other days, can almost be heard now in the stillness of the closet, whose present condition and wants are from the latest tidings anxiously inferred and conjectured—with all the particularity of personal affection, one prays for one; and that kind Father on high, who formed them for mutual love, is beholding both at the same moment, and often, no doubt, though they are widely severed, at the same moment turns the rising prayer of the one

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into showers of blessing upon the other. Who can tell how many such scenes, far and wide over our land, the angels look down upon from heaven, the loving Saviour sees, who on earth was wont to wrestle intensely in solitary prayer, and whose mild eye rests now in human sympathy and in Divine mercy upon every praying disciple.

And not merely at set times, but often, by day or by night, our fervent ejaculations are heard by Him, who amid the wide tumult of earth's voices of business and suffering, of folly and crime, misses no word of prayer, no sigh of supplication. Often, amid the fatigues of out-door work or the bustle of domestic duties, our thoughts fly away to you and then fly up to Heaven. Often, when we awake at night, it is to you our spirits turn; and tears on the pillow could sometimes tell that we pray for you.

We pray for the cause—that just and glorious cause in which you so nobly struggle—that it may please God to make you triumphant, that we may have independence and peace. We do not delude ourselves with the idea that a righteous cause must certainly prevail; in some instances, for wise reasons, God suffers those who are in the right to be overwhelmed. But we believe that it is never in vain humbly and earnestly to cry to the merciful Ruler of all, who will grant just what we ask, or something which he sees to be better. And trying to realize that there is power in prayer, and seeking truly to humble ourselves before him, we pray God to grant us success in driving our enemies back, till the last footstep of invasion shall have passed from our borders, and our now darkened and suffering land shall be radiant with the sunshine of peace and prosperity. We cannot share your trials and perils in the camp and the battle, but for your cause and our cause, for your country and ours, God be thanked that we can pray.

We pray for your precious life—that if it be our Father's will, you may be spared to come back to your home and to us. We know that the very hairs of your head are numbered, and that nothing, however serious or however slight, can befall you without his knowledge and his permission; and we delight to commend you to his powerful protection, his tender care. In the hour of hardship and danger, in the season of weakness and pain, we, alas! are far away; but we pray that he, who is ever near, will shield you, and strengthen and soothe. From all the missiles of the foe, and from the stealthy approaches of disease, may he mercifully deliver you; and O! may he soon bring you back, with the glow of health on your sun-burnt cheek, the grace of the soldier in your step, and the joy of victory in your heart, to be the light of our eyes at home.

"Thou Being, all seeing,
O hear our fervent prayer;
Still take him, and make him
Thy most peculiar care."

We pray for your soul. Ah! what shall it comfort us, and what shall it profit you, if you gain the noblest earthly triumphs, the most abiding earthly fame, yea every good that earth can give, and lose your soul! If we continually beseech the Lord that your mortal life may be preserved and made happy, with what absorbing, agonizing earnestness must we pray for your immortal soul, that it may be delivered from the eternal degradation and wretchedness which are the wages of sin, and be brought to know the sweetness of God's service here, the rapture of his presence hereafter. We know it must be hard for you, amid the

distractions of camp-life, the alternate excitement and ennui, the absence of home-influences and of the associations of the sanctuary, to fix mind and heart on things above. We do not doubt the nobleness of your impulses, or the sincerity of your frequent resolutions to do right, nor would we exaggerate the temptations of a soldier's life. It is no reproach on your manliness, and no assumption of superiority on our part, to utter the mournful truth, that spiritually man is always and everywhere weak; that you wrestle against outnumbering and overpowering spiritual foes. We pray that you may be inclined and enabled to commit your soul to the Divine Saviour, who died to redeem us, and ever lives to intercede for us, and who with yearning love is ever saying, "Come unto me." We pray that the Holy Spirit may thoroughly change your heart, bringing you truly to hate sin, and love holiness, and may graciously strengthen you to withstand temptation, and give you more and more the mastery over yourself, and the victory over every enemy of your soul. Whether it be appointed you to fall soon in battle, or years hence to die at home, may God in mercy forbid that you should live in impenitence, and die in your sins. Whether we are to sit with you again around our own fire-side, and "take sweet counsel together as we walk to the house of God in company," or are to meet you no more on earth, O may God in mercy save us from an eternal separation!

If accustomed to pray yourself, we are sure that you pray for us. Blessed privilege! mystical channel of communion between those who are parted; for not only may our loving thoughts fly to greet each other,

> "Like rays of stars that meet in space,
> And mingle in a bright embrace,"—

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but when you pray for us, and we for you, the far distance melts away, and we are kneeling side by side before the mercy-seat of God.

And if you have been neglecting this sublimest privilege of earthly life, will you not now begin to pray, for yourself and for us? Unworthy, do you say, tempted and erring, engrossed with cares, ensnared by sinful pleasures? Flee, flee to him who came to "save his people from their sins." He has offered himself an atoning sacrifice, and "his blood cleanseth from all sin." He stands ever ready to plead for them "that come unto God through him." Apart from him, there is no hope for you or for any one; but asking in his name, you shall not ask in vain. Three times over he has said it, and again three times, that trembling hearts may have no room for fear, he has repeated the assurance, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Encouraged by the Saviour's precious words, and relying simply on the Saviour's merits, bow just as you are before the Lord, begin at once to pray. And however sorely tempted to give over, from this time "cry day and night unto him:" for "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

EXORTATION TO PRAYER.

1 What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy-seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be often there.

2 Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love;
Brings every blessing from above.

3 Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

4 While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when, through weariness, they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevailed.

5 Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill a fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

6 Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
"Hear what the Lord hath done for me."

PRAYER FOR THE LOVED ONES FROM HOME.

BY B. MANLY, JR., D. D., OF S. C.

Father, who in heaven hearest
Always when thy children pray,
Smile upon our best and dearest,
Far, far away.

When their voices rise to Heaven,
Incense sweet at close of day,
May thy grace to them be given,
Far, far away.

When in sadness dark and dreary
Hearts are sunk that once were gay,
Calm the troubled, soothe the weary,
Far, far away.

'Mid the roar of battle's thunders,
When war's fiercest lightnings play,
Save them, thou that doest wonders,
Far, far away.

Soon, O Lord, in peace restore them,
Safe in happy homes to stay,
Heaven's rich blessing smiling o'er them,
Not far away.

And when all their toil is over,
Take them, Lord, to dwell with thee,
Freed from care and sin forever,
Far, far away.

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